

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 2562

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, UK, MY, SN

SUJ: UK-MALAYSIA DISPUTE OVER CONCORDE

1. DONALD MURRAY, FCO ASSISTANT UNDER SECRETARY, WHO ACCOMPANIED LORD GORONWY-ROBERTS ON THE LATTER'S VISIT TO MALAYSIA, DEBRIEFED ME ON ROBERTS' DUUCUSSIONS WITH THE MALAYSIANS ON THE CONCORDE ISSUE. BELOW IS MURRAY'S ACCOUNT.

2. MURRAY DECLINED TO GUESS HOW CLOSE TO AGREEMENTON CONCORDE THE U.K. AND MALAYSIA WERE. HE INDICATED THAT THERE ARE TWO ISSUED INVOLVED IN THE CONCORDE DISCUSSIONS: A) AIR SERVICES AND B) GOM PERMISSION FOR CONCORDE TO OVERFLY MALAYSIA. ACCORDING TO MURRAY, THE GOM LINKS THE TWO ISSUES, WHILE THE U.K. SEPARATES THEM ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT CANNOT "BUY" CONCORDE OVERFLIGHT RIGHTS WITH CONCESSIONS TO MALAYSIA ON AIR SERVICES. TO DO SO WOULD SET A BAD CIVIL AIR PRECEDENT. THE GOM CLAIMS THAT IT ALSO WANTS TO SEPARATE THE TWO ISSUES BECAUSE IT HAS STIRRED UP ITS OWN ENVIRONMENTALISTS' LOBBY AND CANNOT THEREFORE TRADE OFF ADDED BENEFITS IN AIR SERVICES FOR CONCORDE OVERFLIGHTS. IN REALITY, HOWEVER, THE GOM LINKS THE TWO ISSUES SINCE COMMUNICATIONS MINISTER MANICKSVASAGAM SAYS THE U.K. CHEATED MALAYSIA ON THE DC-10 AGREEMENT.

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3. MURRAY SAID THAT THE GOM AND U.K. HAVE AGREED TO REVIEW THE AIR SERVICES AGREEMENT, AND THAT IT IS NOW A QUESTION OF GETTING DOWN TO DETAILS. MEANWHILE, MURRAY ASSUMES THAT THE U.K. WON'T SEE ANY MOVEMENT ON CONCORDE UNTIL THE GOM SEES WHAT IT CAN GET OUT OF THIS REVIEW.

4. MURRAY INDICATED THAT ROBERTS PUSHED THE MALAYSIANS VERY

HARD TO MOVE ON THE CONCORDE ISSUE AND SUGGESTED A TRIAL PERIOD FOR CONCORDE LIKE THAT WORKED OUT WITH OTHER COUNTRIES. THE MALAYSIANS ARE RESISTING THIS, ASKING WHY MALAYSIA SHOULD BE A GUINEA PIG. THE U.K. IS ARGUING THAT A NUMBER OF OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE ALREADY BEEN GUINEA PIGS AND THAT MALAYSIA WILL BENEFIT FROM THEIR EXPERIENCE. MURRAY ALSO NOTED THAT, ALTHOUGH THE MALAYSIANS DENY THAT THEIR AIR RELATIONS WITH SINGAPORE ARE INVOLVED WITH THE CONCORDE ISSUE, SINGAPORE IS IN FACT A COMPLICATING FACTOR.

MILLER

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